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Thursday, 7 December 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan (S/2006/935)

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06-64703 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan (S/2006/935)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Canada, Finland, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Norway and Pakistan, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/935, containing the report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan and head of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): This morning, it is my great pleasure to report to the Security Council on the findings of the mission that visited Afghanistan from 11 to 16 November 2006, in which I had the privilege of serving as team leader.

The Security Council mission to Afghanistan was the second carried out since 2002 in support of the Afghan people. The mission noted significant efforts undertaken by Afghans and the international community during the past four years to achieve national reconciliation and promote democratic institutions, which the Bonn Agreement had envisaged. The Bonn Agreement was successfully concluded one year ago, in December 2005, with the opening of a democratically elected National Assembly. In all 34 provinces, there are now functioning provincial councils.

Afghanistan is set to enjoy continuing high rates of economic growth and increasing per capita income, expanding trade and investment with regional partners, significant infrastructure projects in place, including roads and power generation facilities, and programmes in the fields of education, rural development and the development of new Afghan security institutions. The Afghanistan Compact — a new five-year blueprint for cooperation between the international community and the Government of Afghanistan — was launched in January this year at the London Conference, with the aim of laying firmer groundwork to ensure that Afghanistan would embark on a period of genuine stability and development. Those are positive achievements and developments, and they merit high praise.

However, progress in 2006 towards realizing the vision set out in the Afghanistan Compact has not been as smooth or rapid as had been hoped, owing to a number of reasons. Among them, uneven efforts to improve governance and establish the rule of law, the growing Taliban-led insurgency and widespread insecurity in the south and east of the country, an upsurge in illegal drug production and trafficking, and pervasive corruption in the governing systems were noted in the briefings that the Council mission received on the ground. Those factors, combined with the still very fragile State institutions, feed into the disappointment and disillusionment of Afghans and are beginning to test the confidence of the Afghan public in its nascent institutions and processes. The mission also noted with grave concern that growing insecurity in parts of the south and south-east was disrupting rehabilitation and reconstruction work by Afghans, the United Nations and other international partners.

It was against that background that our mission took place. The mission recognized that Afghanistan had to start its reconciliation and reconstruction effort not just from the zero point, but further below, from deep minuses, after decades of conflict. In such

circumstances, the time frame required and the patience needed for national healing and readjustment and for the march forward will be different from the ordinary. As the history and the experiences of nations have taught us, such a process cannot be completed in a short period of time or in linear progression. There are bound to be some zigzags and ups and downs.

However, few can deny that Afghanistan is now at a crossroads. The country is set to move forward with promises of reconstruction and development based on democratic institutions. But at the same time it is also being confronted, in its fragility, with a host of challenges and difficulties, including those related to security. No one can guarantee that, without determined efforts on the part of Afghanistan and sustained support over the long haul from the international community, the country will not slide towards broader conflict once again.

The primary messages that the Council mission wished to stress, therefore, were essentially twofold: first, that the firm and unyielding commitment of the international community in support of the Government and the people of Afghanistan and their country's transition was unwavering; and second, that the Afghanistan Compact, which is owned and led by Afghans, remains the central strategic framework for cooperation between the Afghan Government and the international community. The Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, must ensure its steady and faithful implementation.

The report of the mission is before members. It describes its findings in some detail and, on the basis of those findings, presents several recommendations. I already had an opportunity, in a public meeting on 22 November (S/PV.5570), to make remarks on the activities and some of the findings of the mission. What I intend to do here is to provide a brief explanation of the situation that the mission encountered and then to give a summary of its recommendations.

First is a matter of great concern: the security situation. Security was the dominant concern in Afghanistan. Many of the mission's interlocutors expressed apprehension about the rise in violence in parts of the country. The insurgency appeared to be more or less confined to one third of the country. However, the security situation in general remained precarious throughout the country.

After a worrying upsurge in the number of security-related incidents throughout spring and summer this year, some interlocutors said there were signs that insurgent- and terrorist-related violence might be subsiding after October. There were, however, more cautious views on that prognosis.

The growth of the Taliban-led insurgency has been fed in part by the failure of the Government and the international community to provide basic services, credible governance and security in many urban centres and rural communities. Highlighted in that connection were the weakness of the incipient Afghan National Police, a lack of the rule of law and pervasive corruption. It was also alleged that the narcotics industry and the money it generates play an important part in feeding the insurgency forces.

Many expressed frustration about the current state of the Afghan National Police. Proposals had been made to the international community to support police expansion to meet the latest challenges of the insurgency and the deteriorating security in some regions. The mission was briefed on the importance of strong recruitment, vetting and monitoring procedures for the new Afghan National Auxiliary Police.

The mission paid tribute to the leading role that the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had assumed in contributing to security in support of the Afghan Government. It also took note of ISAF's continuing need for adequate forces and resources. The Afghan side also noted that, despite unfortunate incidents such as those resulting in civilian casualties, there was still overwhelming support for the presence of international security forces. Better coordination between the international forces and the Afghan Government was called for by Afghan interlocutors.

Next is the issue of impunity and corruption. Throughout the mission, interlocutors cited corruption and the perpetuation of a culture of impunity as the root causes of popular Afghan disaffection and unease. It was pointed out that widespread corruption in law enforcement and in judicial institutions was central to the population's decreasing trust in the Government. An anti-corruption commission had been established two months earlier and was working to identify the nature and the scope of the problem. Solutions,

however, remained elusive. Support and expertise would be required from Afghanistan's international partners in this regard.

It was also pointed out that the continued tolerance of positions of authority given to the former commanders and warlords was contributing to instability. Government efforts to diminish the authority of those figures would also require international support. The Government's strategy to disband illegally armed groups was considered a key vehicle for dismantling the power base of those commanders.

The next issue to which I would like to refer is governance. Afghanistan was in desperate need of training of professionals. The Afghan leadership identified the restructuring of the civil service and the strengthening of its capacity as the top priority for Afghanistan and its international partners. A premium was placed on enhancing human capital at all levels as a precondition for an effective public sector and for sustained progress towards development goals.

On human rights and the protection of civilians, Afghan and international interlocutors expressed concern about the increase in human rights violations and the failure to ensure the protection of civilians — including in the context of the attacking and burning of schools — the Government's failure to uphold equal rights in law and the restrictions on public discourse. The mission took note of their concern that the space made for human rights and gender equality, which had opened following the ousting of the Taliban in 2001, had recently begun to close.

The mission participated in the third session of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). The JCMB had demonstrated a growing capacity to monitor progress and address bottlenecks hindering the implementation of Compact benchmarks. While the efforts of the JCMB should be commended, in order for the Compact to deliver visible change to the Afghan people, Government-led coordination efforts would need to be strengthened and integrated under the overall National Development Strategy.

Pervasive unemployment, particularly among the young, is one of the central factors contributing to instability in the country. Attracting private sector investors is important, but the lack of security deterred those investments that could generate jobs.

Insecurity, ongoing drought, flooding and combat operations have all combined to displace larger population groups inside Afghanistan this year, generating fresh vulnerabilities and new humanitarian needs. In this regard, increased efforts are needed to ensure the delivery of assistance to people living in more remote areas of Afghanistan.

I would like briefly to refer to the issue of counter-narcotics efforts. Afghanistan's burgeoning narco-economy was identified by the vast majority of the mission's interlocutors as a primary threat to stability. It was described as a cancer which would spread and kill Afghan society over the long term. The mission was informed that in 2006, opium poppy cultivation represented 60 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product. The importance of much more energetic measures and of regional and international cooperation in combating drug trafficking was underscored.

With regard to regional cooperation to address the many problems, it is clear that such cooperation is of the utmost importance in resolving Afghanistan's challenges, since issues of security have regional as well as internal dimensions. Many interlocutors stressed that the existence of sanctuaries in Pakistan for insurgent groups must be addressed by law enforcement and other means. The mission was briefed by the Afghan side about the negative impact on border security that could result from the recent peace deal in North Waziristan, Pakistan.

For its part, the Pakistani side, pointing out its burden of accepting a large number of refugees, stressed that a stable Afghanistan was essential for Pakistan's security. It said that Pakistan was doing its best to improve the security in the border area, having suffered casualties in the operations, while admitting the difficulty of ensuring effective control over the long border, which has many crossing points. It was pointed out that cooperation among Pakistan, Afghanistan and international forces was ongoing at various levels, including through the Tripartite Commission. The ISAF commander in Kabul, for his part, told the mission that he appreciated the emerging tripartite cooperation. As regards the peace deal in North Waziristan, the Pakistani side pointed out that the assertion that the peace deal has resulted in an increase in incidents did not reflect the facts. The mission encouraged Pakistan to monitor the North Waziristan agreement with a view to ensuring that the

cross-border impact of that or any future agreement is positive for security and stability.

The mission was encouraged by the efforts of the Afghan and Pakistani leaders to promote mutual cooperation and trust, including through people-to-people contact. The mission was briefed on plans to hold cross-border jirgas on security.

Finally, Afghan interlocutors strongly praised the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Donors similarly welcomed the expanded UNAMA presence, describing it as a huge plus. The mission acknowledged the voices calling for UNAMA to play greater coordination role between them and the military.

Now, I should like to turn briefly to the key findings of the mission.

First, the spread of insurgent and terrorist activity by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, coupled with corruption and failures of governance, collectively pose a grave threat to nation-building. To overcome those challenges, the Afghan Government and the international community have established a sound strategy, including, in particular, the Afghanistan Compact. The Council will need to ensure that this shared strategy remains firm and enduring.

The Afghanistan Compact is the best framework for cooperation between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community and should be moved forward to serious action under the overall guidance of the JCMB. The Afghan Government should transform its ownership into further action, with a view to achieving the benchmarks set out in the Compact. The international community, for its part, should provide additional support on an ongoing basis, both for quick gains and for sustained progress.

Secondly, with regard to international military forces, NATO and other countries are urged to maintain and increase their commitment to ISAF to meet the challenge of the current security environment in Afghanistan. It is important to establish a strong and sustainable Afghan national army and a trusted and effective national police force. With regard to the establishment of the police force, donors and the Afghan Government should redouble their collective efforts. The international community should also revitalize its support for the Afghan Government's efforts to disband illegally armed groups.

On the rule of law and good governance, the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of its international partners, should, as a matter of the highest priority, establish the rule of law and good governance throughout the country. Immediate steps must be taken to strengthen justice sector institutions and provincial governments, including through the replacement of corrupt officials and local power brokers.

The Government and the international community should sharpen their focus on human rights and the protection of civilians. The Government is also encouraged to reinforce its commitment to human rights and reconciliation and increase support for the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and the implementation of the Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Action Plan, as required by the Compact. The Government and donors should empower women as a true cross-cutting priority.

Next, with regard to the coordination and delivery of humanitarian and development assistance, such assistance should, wherever possible, be delivered by skilled and experienced civilian actors, and the capacity for civilian coordination of humanitarian assistance should be strengthened in 2007. At the same time, given the prevailing circumstances in Afghanistan, assistance will need to be provided by those best placed to deliver it. The focus should be to extend development to the provinces, strengthen accountability at the community level, and achieve tangible and visible results. The JCMB coordination mechanism should be further improved and focused on delivery.

In the area of counter-narcotics, the Government and the international community should do much more to strengthen their efforts to fight this scourge by helping diversify means of livelihood, so that rural communities can move away from the illegal cultivation of the opium poppy and pursue legitimate economic opportunities. The Government, with support from the international community, should step up activities aimed at the arrest and prosecution of major drug traffickers, regardless of their position or status.

With respect to regional cooperation, fostering trust and cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbouring and regional partners is of crucial

importance for peace, security and development in the region. The mission welcomes the efforts made by the Governments of Afghanistan and of Pakistan to fight terrorism and to reinforce border security, and it urges both Governments to intensify dialogue and collaboration. The mission looks forward to the outcome of plans by the two countries to hold cross-border jirgas to improve security and stability, on the basis of better understanding and mutual trust.

The list established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1267 (1999) should continue to be updated as necessary and on the basis of the most current information, as envisaged by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to UNAMA, the United Nations should continue to play a central and impartial role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. The Secretary-General is encouraged to consider measures to promote UNAMA's coordination role, at both the capital and country levels, and to make recommendations in his next report.

Finally, the mission recognizes the extremely difficult and stressful circumstances under which UNAMA and the rest of the United Nations family are operating in Afghanistan. Acknowledging their dedication and commitment, the mission report concludes by calling on Member States to provide all necessary support to allow the United Nations to carry out its mandate in such a challenging environment.

I will conclude my remarks on behalf of the Council mission by expressing its deep appreciation to the Governments of Afghanistan and of Pakistan, to the Commander of ISAF and its contributing countries, to UNAMA and the country team, to non-governmental and civil society organizations active in the country, and to all other interlocutors for their support and cooperation and for the opportunities for discussion that the mission was provided during the course of its visit.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): I would like first of all to thank Ambassador Oshima for his excellent leadership of the Security Council's mission to Afghanistan last month and for his report to the Council. Denmark fully supports the report and its recommendations. I would, however, like to make a few comments and observations in my national capacity.

The serious challenges and obstacles facing Afghanistan which are detailed in the report should not be underestimated. We believe that the overall process that began with the Bonn Agreement and now continues under the Afghanistan Compact is largely on track and that the right strategies are in place. But a continued strong and long-term commitment to see them through — on the part of both the Afghan Government and the international community — remains absolutely essential.

Considerable progress has been achieved, including the establishment of representative political institutions, the enhanced capacity of the security sector and improvements in human rights, including women's rights and media freedom. But in spite of that progress, Afghanistan is facing a number of intractable problems.

The persistent threat to security posed by armed groups such as the Taliban throughout large parts of the country, the reign of drug lords and other criminal elements, the weak central Government presence and service delivery outside Kabul, and the continued high levels of corruption and impunity among key public officials have undermined the Afghan people's trust in their own Government and triggered a vicious circle in which the lack of development and productive employment opportunities feeds insecurity, and vice versa.

The only way to break this cycle is to continue to do what the Afghan Government, the international community and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) are already doing, that is, to endeavour to improve the Government's institutional capacity for service delivery throughout Afghanistan, including agricultural and rural infrastructure support for viable alternatives to poppy cultivation; strengthen accountability and the rule of law by bringing corrupt officials to justice and promote further respect for human rights, including women's rights, which are currently under increasing attack; and build up the capacity of the Afghan army and police force, ensuring full coordination and cooperation between the Afghan security structures and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

I would in this regard particularly like to emphasize the need for improved aid coordination so as to get more out of the limited resources available. We believe that UNAMA's coordination role should be

strengthened. It is particularly important to ensure that the increasing amount of aid provided through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams is made fully accountable and aligned with the development priorities in the Afghanistan Compact.

Another key area in which urgent action is needed is the implementation of the Government's action plan for transitional justice. The fact that former warlords and others who have committed massive human rights violations continue to serve in public office is clearly perpetuating the culture of impunity and undermining the public's trust in the rule of law.

Finally, we would like to stress the importance of regional cooperation, including cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, on improving security in the border region. The current insurgency in Afghanistan cannot be brought to a halt as long as sanctuaries exist for the insurgents across the country's borders. We therefore welcome Pakistan's determination, stated during the mission's visit to Islamabad, to prevent Talibanization and terrorism and to reinforce border security. We welcome the fact that preparations for the proposed cross-border jirgas, which are part of the strategy to counter that threat, are currently being discussed at the highest level.

Afghanistan has travelled a long way in the past five years. With continued efforts to overcome the current challenges, we hope that, in another five years, the Afghan people will be able to enjoy increased stability, prosperity and democracy.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tom Koenigs and to all the staff of UNAMA for the sterling job that they are doing in Afghanistan, often at great personal risk.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Oshima for his excellent leadership of the mission to Afghanistan and, indeed, for the work of the Japanese Mission here in leading work on this subject in the Council.

The report of the mission is a comprehensive assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, and Ambassador Oshima's briefing today was similarly thorough and thought-provoking. My thanks go also to Special Representative Koenigs and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for the job they do day by day in Afghanistan. And I align myself with the statement to be made in due course by the Ambassador of Finland on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The United Kingdom is committed to assisting Afghanistan in the long term. Tony Blair in Kabul as recently as 20 November stressed the importance to the international community of delivering a secure, stable Afghanistan. The United Kingdom is a major contributor to the international effort in Afghanistan, through NATO, the European Union and in our bilateral programme. And we have led the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) military operation through this particularly challenging year. Like others around the table, we are also heading up one of the provincial reconstruction teams. There is one in Helmand.

Security, particularly in the south, is proving challenging. The Taliban's direct offensive on ISAF this summer was defeated, but we can expect continuing disruption from anti-Government elements. We believe neither the Taliban nor other illegal armed groups currently pose a credible threat to the overall stability of Afghanistan, but they can seriously disrupt the work of improving the quality of life of the Afghan people. Our role is to support President Karzai in his Government's effort to extend security and stability throughout the country and to improve development prospects. So, we welcome the continued commitment to Afghan security shown at NATO's Riga summit, but there are still some capability gaps, as Ambassador Oshima recalled today. But allies are working to ensure that these are filled. Equally, it is important to continue the development of Afghan security forces, the indigenous capability, including the Afghan National Police.

We need to accelerate work to establish the rule of law. As Ambassador Oshima noted earlier, capacity-building here is a critical challenge. Failure to consolidate gains made in this area will undermine popular support for the wider reform programme. We must use the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan to support police salaries and other rule of law-related capacity-building.

Drugs continue to remain, in our view, the gravest threat to the long-term security, development and effective governance of Afghanistan. The Afghan Government's national drug control strategy, with its four priorities — targeting the trafficker, strengthening

livelihoods, reducing demand and developing effective institutions — seem to us the right approach. That means that we need increased and sustained assistance, including to the Afghan Counter Narcotics Trust Fund, and we should provide international mentors for the counter-narcotics police of Afghanistan. This is vital if we are to ensure that the progress to date is not undermined.

It is important, generally, that we all look at what more we can do to support international objectives in Afghanistan. An EU fact-finding mission is in Afghanistan now, looking at how the European Union can further assist in developing policing and related rule-of-law issues, including counter-narcotics. We hope that this will lead to the deployment of new EU assets in the new year.

The position of women in Afghanistan is an area where we have seen important progress since 2001, from an abysmal start, it has to be said, but some progress, not least in the level of representation in the National Assembly and in an increase in access to education. There are still, of course, problems from those years when girls were not allowed to have any education. There is clearly, therefore, much more to be done to consolidate education for those now coming through and for those who missed it previously. So, we would strongly urge the Government to reconsider any suggestions to abolish the Ministry of Women's Affairs. In our view, the Ministry plays an integral role in ensuring the full participation of women in all aspects of peace consolidation and peacebuilding in Afghanistan.

We cannot afford to lose momentum. It is vital that the Afghanistan Compact Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) gives direction and impetus to the programmes set out in the Compact, including on institutional capacity-building and counter-narcotics. So, we are pleased to see that the Council's report notes that the JCMB capability is developing. It was welcome that the mission participated in one of their sessions in Kabul.

Finally, I would like to underline British support for the report's call for enhanced regional cooperation. This is vital, in particular, for Afghan and Pakistan governmental contribution — that they should work together to counter the common Taliban threat. So, the plans for the cross-border jirgas are particularly welcome.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru)(*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to express the gratitude of the delegation of Peru for the work done by the Security Council mission to Afghanistan, led by the Ambassador of Japan, Mr. Kenzo Oshima, and I would like to thank him for the report he has given us this morning.

We believe that the work that was done by the mission, which is condensed in the report he presented to us, is useful in order to understand the situation on the ground. In this way, the Security Council has news of the process in Afghanistan, which is necessary in order to support the efforts of the Government and people of Afghanistan to build a democratic and viable State, one which is fully integrated in its region and in the international system.

The report on the Security Council's mission acknowledges a few encouraging advances in infrastructure, true economic and trade progress, as well as in basic social services. However, it also confirms that the situation is basically fragile in Afghanistan as this year comes to an end. Despite the optimism generated by the adoption of the Compact last January, the reality presents a picture where the political and social order faces serious threats that endanger what has been achieved until now.

The Afghan authorities have made efforts in order to find a way out of the crisis. However, as the report says, these efforts until now have been insufficient in consolidating the rule of law or establishing firm governance with prospects of viable economic sustainability. There are many problems that are facing Afghanistan and endangering its viability as an emerging nation, a nation integrated constructively within the region.

The difficult transition in this country does not only generate a situation of crisis within its territory but also raises the risk of instability at the regional level. The intensification of the extremist insurgency, led by the Taliban, and the increasing insecurity in the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan endanger the new institutions in this country. Narco-trafficking, corruption and crime in general provide fertile ground for the activities of illegal armed groups. I am not going to repeat figures that we find in the mission's report, in the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and in other international studies with which we are all familiar.

This is in contrast to four years of efforts at the United Nations and in the international community to bring stability to that country. It is enough to point out that it is very disturbing to see that opium cultivation represents 60 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Afghanistan. No State can be in a position to function in a stable manner when it must face such a huge challenge.

As we have seen in othe regions of the world, crime, corruption and drug trafficking are activities that go hand in hand. When we fail to halt them in time with coherent policies, they seriously affect security, the development of democratic institutions, economic reconstruction, the rule of law and human rights.

Measures designed to improve civil security are necessary but insufficient conditions. It is critical for that country to find alternative modes of legal economic activity if it is to be sustainable as a State. Social indicators reveal high rates of illiteracy and low rates of human development, which generate structural underdevelopment that hampers reconstruction in that country. In that context, I stress the importance of improved training of human resources in Afghanistan.

Development assistance is absolutely crucial. In item 41, the mission's report refers to that aspect in recommending that emphasis be placed on the development of the provinces and the implementation of employment-generating programmes, given that the lack of job opportunities contributes significantly to the recruitment of insurgents and exacerbates poverty and the conditions that have fuelled drug trafficking and corruption.

Lastly, we join the appeal to the international community to step up its efforts to identify measures to stabilize Afghanistan, improve security conditions there, strengthen and define the institutional framework, and lay the foundations of sustainable economic growth based on productive and viable activities.

Ms. Sanders (United States of America): The United States expresses its appreciation to Ambassador Oshima, the Japanese mission and the Secretariat for this comprehensive report and for all the work that went into planning and undertaking this valuable mission.

We applaud the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan, as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for their hard and difficult work. We are pleased that the international community solidly supports Afghanistan and its democratic transition. The United States commends the extraordinary work of the members of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and NATO. Despite many challenges, their contributions have improved security, democracy and governance in Afghanistan, added to its economic and social development, as well as assisted in counter-narcotics and regional stabilization efforts.

The recent trip of the Security Council clearly demonstrated that the international community's support will not diminish. We look forward to working with the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to help bring about security and stability in Afghanistan, including through continuing implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. We affirm our commitment to working with the Government of Afghanistan, ISAF partners and the United Nations towards security, democracy and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the Security Council's successful mission to Afghanistan. The report before us contains many important ideas and recommendations. We believe that it will be very helpful to the Council in addressing the issue of Afghanistan in its next phase.

I thank Ambassador Oshima and the Japanese delegation for their initiative and active efforts to make the mission possible and successful.

I should like to take this opportunity to stress three points.

First, security and stability remain the top priority for Afghanistan and should be addressed with enhanced effort. China supports the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to combat terrorist and extremist activities and to maintain national security and stability. The international community should provide more resources to help Afghanistan to strengthen its military and police forces so that it can, independently and as soon as possible, assume the responsibility for maintaining national security and social stability.

Secondly, it is necessary to accelerate economic and social reconstruction in Afghanistan so that development and dignity can be enjoyed by all

Afghans. The international community should make further efforts to assist the Afghan Government effectively to implement the Afghanistan Compact and the interim Afghan National Development Strategy so as to help it to achieve tangible progress on the economy, infrastructure, education, human rights and law and order.

The extensive growth in poppy cultivation and illicit trafficking poses a life-and-death challenge to the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. We urge Afghanistan to strive to counter the drug threat and hope that it can cooperate closely with the United Nations, regional organizations and its neighbours to that end.

Thirdly, the international community should continue to provide unwavering support to the people and Government of Afghanistan in order to propel that country towards success. That is the common responsibility of the international community. We support an enhanced and more extensive role for the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in the peacebuilding effort in that country. We call on the international community to continue to provide multifaceted support and assistance to Afghanistan and to make every effort to implement tangible and beneficial projects for the Afghan people.

As a friendly neighbouring country of Afghanistan, China will, as always, make a constructive contribution to help Afghanistan to achieve peace, stability and economic and social development and to maintain regional peace and stability.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation thanks the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Oshima, for organizing the visiting mission of the Security Council to Afghanistan and for submitting his exhaustive report on its results. The conclusions contained in that document will serve as a good basis for the Council's further efforts to resolve the situation in Afghanistan.

I will briefly address the main points relating to the priorities of our future work in that regard.

We are seriously concerned by the negative trends emerging in the situation in that country. Afghanistan faces a significant number of challenges and threats. In dealing with the threats posed by the implacable extremists, the ongoing and uncompromising struggle against them and the strict implementation of the Council's sanctions regime against members of the Taliban and Al-Qaida are of particular importance. The generally complex situation is being exacerbated by the ever-increasing drug threat and its negative impact on the fight against terrorism and State administration reform. The dangerous link between illicit drug trafficking and the terrorist activities of the Taliban is growing.

In such circumstances, we must implement a range of measures to counter Afghan drug trafficking, including the creation and strengthening of existing security buffer zones in the context of international and regional cooperation. We must also implement a full spectrum of measures in the security sector, strengthening the ranks and effectiveness of the national army and the police, disarming illegal armed groups, addressing corruption and drug trafficking, and enhancing regional cooperation.

The Russian delegation is convinced that a stable settlement in Afghanistan is possible only on the basis of previously agreed arrangements, including the decisions of the Berlin conference of April 2004. That implies ensuring the participation of representatives of all political, ethnic and religious groups of Afghan society in the administrative institutions of the Afghan Government and requires the assistance of those neighbours of Afghanistan that can exercise a positive effect on the situation and in the restoration of the country. We feel that more active and collective international involvement in resolving the situation in Afghanistan will ensure the successful implementation of the recovery programme for Afghanistan set forth in the London Agreement. We believe that the United Nations will continue to play a key role in resolving the situation in Afghanistan and that under the aegis of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) there will be strict monitoring and coordination in the implementation of the Compact.

Russia continues to assist Afghanistan on a bilateral basis. We feel that our support, as part of the international effort, will help to turn Afghanistan into an independent and flourishing State that is free from the Taliban, terrorism and narcotics. We are ready to coordinate our efforts towards those goals with the Afghanistan Government and the international community.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): First, I wish to join those who have already thanked Ambassador Oshima for the briefing to the Council this morning on the results of the lessons learned by the Security Council mission to Afghanistan. My delegation fully supports that assessment of the situation, as well as the recommendations, and would like to congratulate Ambassador Oshima for the manner in which he prepared and led the mission. My delegation also supports the statement to be made later by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

I wish to make a few additional comments on what my delegation believes should guide the future actions of the international community and in particular, those of the United Nations. Given the fear that the international community could disengage, it is crucial to reaffirm the long-term commitment of the international community to Afghanistan and the Security Council mission has contributed to that assurance.

Afghanistan is experiencing a difficult situation, even if the security situation appears to be stabilizing as winter approaches. The contribution of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the improvement must be recognized — Operation Medusa has strengthened its credibility — and it must continue to receive our full support. Beyond that, we must also strengthen our efforts to provide training and equipment for the Afghan security forces. France is strongly committed to those efforts through its military presence in Afghanistan.

The many difficult problems faced by Afghanistan cannot be resolved exclusively through military means. Our action must be part of a global strategy to strengthen the responsibility of the Afghan authorities and neighbouring countries and improve the daily living conditions of the population. Thus, it is important for the Afghan authorities and the international community to maintain their efforts. That is true first of all for the Afghan authorities. They must strive to achieve, within the timeframe, the objectives set forth in the Afghanistan Compact by placing particular priority on the following issues: improved governance and a firm fight against corruption, the disbandment of illegally armed groups — a necessary condition for long-term stability — and lastly, strengthening the fight against drug trafficking within the national strategy adopted by the Afghanistan Government. Efforts already under way concerning protection of human rights must also be continued.

At the same time, the international community must maintain its own efforts. The United Nations, through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), has a central and impartial role — namely, for coordination of the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. It alone has the necessary legitimacy and expertise to assume the role of coordinator in reconstruction efforts and promoting support to strengthen the State of Afghanistan. Therefore, we must give UNAMA the means to fully carry out its mission.

My delegation reiterates its wish that the presence of UNAMA be extended to new provinces, subject to security conditions. We also take the opportunity to pay tribute to the work of UNAMA and in particular, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tom Koenigs.

Lastly, the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan have a decisive role to play. Pakistan and Afghanistan must work hand in hand in order to fully control the borders between the two countries. The work of the Tripartite Commission, as well as the Jirga project on both sides of the border, are both positive developments. Those efforts must be part of an overall perspective to strengthen regional cooperation. We must therefore maintain our efforts to deal with the current difficulties and not endanger the significant progress that has been made since the Bonn process. France will play its full role in that effort.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have just heard the last speaker among the Council members. I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): At the outset I wish to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Voto-Bernales of Peru for the able manner in which he led the work of the Council during the month of November. We pay tribute to all of the members of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan, for their recent visit under the leadership of Ambassador Kenzo Oshima. The visit presented another opportunity for the Council to review the ongoing efforts of my Government to achieve sustained progress in the areas of the security, social and economic development, good governance, human

rights and the rule of law — with the support of our international partners. Most importantly, it reaffirmed to our people the sustained focus and commitment of the international community to a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. I am also thankful to other members of the Council — some of whom were also part of the mission to Afghanistan — Denmark, the United Kingdom, Peru, the United States, China, Russian Federation, France — for their proposals, which contained interesting points to be addressed by the Council.

We express our appreciation to the Council for having published — in a short period of time — a comprehensive report on the mission's activities during the course of its visit (S/2006/935). We also thank the Japanese delegation for its assistance in that matter. We fully support the recommendations presented in the report, which was the work, in large part, of Ambassador Oshima.

Much has changed in Afghanistan since the first visit of the Security Council mission in 2002. Together, we and the international community have succeeded in implementing milestones and benchmarks that were set out in the Bonn Agreement. The holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, progress towards the formation of a national army and police, the return of more than 5 million children to schools, including girls, and the adoption of a constitution that safeguards and guarantees equal rights between men and women — are but some of the many achievements that have taken place. Nevertheless, despite these achievements, we continue to face daunting challenges that affect the daily lives of our people. The prevailing security situation and the slow pace of development remain in the forefront of our challenges.

Terrorism constitutes the most significant threat to the security and prosperity of our people. Just two weeks ago, on 25 November, a suicide bomber of foreign origin walked into a restaurant in the south-eastern province of Paktika and carried out a suicide attack, brutally killing 15 civilians and injuring 12 others. Such attacks and other forms of terrorism, which occur particularly along the south and south-east border of the country, continue to be carried out in an organized manner.

These attacks take place despite the rigorous efforts of both the Afghan Government and the international community to provide security for our people. In this regard, we note with particular concer that cross-border terrorists and extremists operating i Afghanistan and in the region beyond receive incessan support in terms of financial, ideological and logistica assistance from sources located outside Afghanistan' borders.

In this context, allow me to refer briefly t paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report o 11 September 2006 (S/2006/727) in which he states,

> "The leadership relies heavily on cross-borde fighters, many of whom are Afghans drawn fro nearby refugee camps and radical seminaries i Pakistan ... They are trained and paid to serve a medium-level commanders, leading operation inside Afghanistan, and they are able to retrea back to safe havens outside the country."

Relevant resolutions of the General Assembly an the Security Council dealing with internationa terrorism, in particular Assembly resolution 49/60 o 1994, by which the Assembly adopted the Declaratio on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, an Council resolution 1373 (2001), oblige States to refra from organizing, assisting and perpetrating terrori attacks. The 1994 Declaration on the elimination o terrorism contains a specific provision that calls o States to ensure that their respective territories are no used for terrorist installations or training camps. I addition, resolution 1373 (2001) requires States t bring to justice any person who supports, facilitate participates or attempts to participate in the financin planning, preparation or perpetration of terrori attacks or provides safe havens.

We are of the view that the strict compliance b States with the aforementioned resolutions and text would contribute significantly to peace and stability i Afghanistan.

Afghanistan attaches great importance to the rol of regional cooperation in combating terrorism. A mor robust and comprehensive campaign against terrorism not only serves the interest of peace and stability i Afghanistan, but also benefits the security and stabilit of the region and beyond.

Based on a proposal made by President Karza we are preparing to convene a cross-border Jirga o security, consisting of influential tribal and religiou figures from both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakista border, with a view to enhancing local and triba

structures to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from Afghanistan and the region. We remain optimistic about the outcome of this initiative. High-level contacts aiming at developing cooperation in the elimination of terrorist acts are now being made and are very important for the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Additional progress in the strengthening of our security institutions is critical to improving the security situation in Afghanistan. Despite inadequate resources, the national army and police are engaged in challenging combat operations against remnants of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups in the southern and south-eastern provinces of the country. Our security forces continue to face significant challenges. Indeed, the lack of modern equipment and logistical support has had a drastic impact on the effectiveness of both the national army and the police. As my delegation indicated in previous statements, a significant improvement in the overall security situation will require the provision of additional resources to our security institutions.

We highlight the importance of the role of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in securing stability and security in Afghanistan. In that regard, the recent conclusion of the third phase of the nationwide expansion of ISAF is yet another important step forward. We also welcome the recent inclusion of ISAF in the Tripartite Commission.

Acceleration of social and economic development is indispensable to overall success in Afghanistan. While we have achieved much progress in many areas, we regret that the pace of reconstruction and development remains relatively slow. Here again, we highlight the need to initiate and implement major reconstruction projects and expedite the provision of basic services so that tangible and visible improvements in the daily lives of our people may be achieved.

We also reiterate the need for sustained international support for the implementation of the Compact and for our interim national development strategy. In this regard, we highlight the need to channel donor assistance through the Afghan national budget, while stressing the leadership role of the Afghan Government in designating development priorities.

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) continues to make progress in carrying out its important mandate. As noted in the report of the Security Council mission, the Board recently convened its third periodic meeting on 12 November. Moving beyond procedural matters, it has begun the process of reviewing progress made in key benchmarks scheduled to be completed very shortly.

Enhanced regional economic cooperation is vital for the timely and effective implementation of the Compact. We express the utmost appreciation to the Government of India for having co-hosted, with us, the Second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, which was held in New Delhi on 18 and 19 November. We were pleased at the broad participation of representatives of neighbouring countries and other international partners. At the conclusion of the two-day meeting, participants reaffirmed the central importance of Afghanistan's development to the growth, stability and prosperity of the region.

The Government of Afghanistan attaches great importance to the fight against corruption and narcotics as key components of the Afghanistan Compact. The dangerous link between the production of narcotics and terrorism poses another threat to the stability and social development of Afghanistan. For its part, Afghanistan has embarked on a series of measures at the national, regional and international levels to combat the scourge of narcotics.

The updated Afghan National Drug Control Strategy, presented at the London Conference on Afghanistan, provides a comprehensive strategy for the elimination of that threat. We continue to make efforts to implement our Strategy. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, the specialized counter-narcotics unit of the Afghan National Police seized approximately 66 tons of narcotics during the first half of 2006. Furthermore, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics has enhanced its coordination with the Counter-Narcotics Tribunal, the Counter-Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force and other relevant agencies.

Despite our efforts, we continue to face significant challenges in our fight against narcotics. We reiterate once again that a particular focus should be accorded to providing alternative crops to farmers as an essential element of a successful counter-narcotics

strategy. Equally important is the need for transit countries to exercise strengthened control over their borders to curb the flow of drugs, and for consuming countries to reduce demand in their markets and to fight against groups that are busy trafficking in those countries.

The fight against corruption is among our top priorities. Having already signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption, we remain committed to completing its ratification, perhaps very shortly. National legislation will be enacted to facilitate the implementation of the Convention by the end of 2007. In that regard, a mechanism will be established with a mandate to monitor and evaluate the process.

Furthermore, pursuant to the instructions of President Karzai, the Government has embarked upon a comprehensive initiative aimed at enhancing transparency and good governance in various Government institutions. As part of that initiative, the Government has established an anti-corruption commission — headed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and composed of numerous agencies — to come up with additional recommendations for further action by the President.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my Government's steadfast commitment to overcome the remaining challenges in implementing the provisions of the Afghanistan Compact, with the support of our international partners. We also express our sincere appreciation to the international community for its ongoing support and assistance with regard to our efforts to achieve a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on the representative of Finland.

Mrs. Schroderus-Fox (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The following countries — Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Ukraine and Moldova — align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union highly commends the timely mission to Afghanistan by the Security Council, under the able leadership of Ambassador Oshima. The mission is a clear sign of the continued commitment of the international community to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. The European Union supports the findings of the mission.

Afghanistan has achieved significant progress in recent years. However, serious challenges, threatening to undermine the achievements to date, remain and in some cases have become more acute in the fields of security, drug production, governance and human rights, anti-corruption and economic development. Afghanistan is at a critical juncture, and urgent, coordinated steps must be taken by the Afghan Government and the international community to face up to those challenges. The military dimension of our efforts should go hand in hand with a strong, high-profile political engagement.

I would like to affirm the European Union's unwavering and long-term support for the Government and the people of Afghanistan. That engagement is based on the Afghanistan Compact and the Joint Political Declaration adopted by the European Union and the Government of Afghanistan on 16 November 2005.

The EU's assistance fosters the establishment of a democratic, accountable, sustainable and self-sufficient Afghan State capable of exercising its sovereignty and protecting the rights of its citizens. The European Union attaches special importance to the protection of human rights, paying special attention to the rights of women and children. The EU encourages the Government of Afghanistan to reinforce its commitment to human rights and reconciliation through increased support for the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and the implementation of the Action Plan for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation in Afghanistan.

The fight against corruption and impunity remains a cross-cutting priority. We highlight the core importance of Afghan leadership and responsibility in that regard.

In the period 2002-2006, the European Union collectively contributed €3.7 billion in aid to Afghanistan, amounting to one third of the aid pledged by the international community. EU Member States have played leading coordinating roles in particular sectors and have made large contributions to security, including through the current provision of approximately half of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) — amounting to more than

16,000 troops — and through participation in provincial reconstruction teams.

The European Union places particular importance on the rule of law, and we are currently considering ways to increase our engagement in this sector. As the report points out, progress on the rule of law, including police and justice, at both the central and provincial levels is essential for the security and long-term stability of Afghanistan. The European Commission intends to increase its contributions for justice reform and local governance, inter alia, through provincial reconstruction teams led by, or with substantial assets from, EU member States.

We have also been actively supporting counter-narcotics efforts. Earlier this year, the EU adopted an action-oriented plan to combat the production of drugs in Afghanistan and their trafficking from that country along heroin routes. The National Drug Control Strategy represents an appropriate approach for tackling the problem, under the primary responsibility of the Afghan Government. Good governance and anti-corruption policies are essential components of counter-narcotics efforts.

The EU also encourages the development of regional cooperation through political dialogue, increased economic links and confidence-building measures between Afghanistan and its neighbours. We call on Afghanistan and Pakistan to deepen relations and to cooperate closely to deal with insecurity in border areas.

The European Union continues to support fully the Afghanistan Compact and considers it the central strategic framework for the future reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan until 2010. We expect strong Afghan leadership and responsibility in implementation of the Compact, we and encourage decisive steps from the Government of Afghanistan to fulfil its commitments under the Afghanistan Compact.

The international community, including the European Union, is fully committed to supporting this Afghan-led process. The bottom-up development strategies highlighted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Tom Koenigs, could provide a valuable contribution for reconstruction and stabilization. The impact of international assistance should be further enhanced through efficient coordination and monitoring.

The United Nations, mainly through UNAMA, continues to have a key role in coordination and monitoring the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, including chairing the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). The EU will, together with UNAMA, NATO and other key actors, including the international financial institutions, work towards effective cooperation and coordination within the international community and with the Government of Afghanistan.

The EU highly appreciates the work of UNAMA and of Special Representative Koenigs in this respect and welcomes the initiative of holding a JCMB meeting of member States at the senior official level in Berlin on the first anniversary of the Afghanistan Compact.

The EU welcomes plans to expand UNAMA's presence throughout the field, security permitting. We also emphasize close collaboration between the United Nations Special Representative, the EU Special Representative and the NATO Senior Civilian Representative.

The European Union will continue to work, on the basis of the Afghanistan Compact, in close collaboration with the Afghan Government and our international partners, to build an Afghanistan whose prosperity and stability matches the hopes, the strength and the fortitude of its people.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Sen (India): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

This discussion is timely, coming as it does in the midst of heightened international focus on Afghanistan and the surrounding region. Any discussion on Afghanistan must begin from the central premise that the international community has an abiding responsibility to assist Afghanistan in consolidating democratic governance, peace, stability and long-term employment-led development, while delivering humanitarian assistance in the interim. Our views are set forth in that context.

We have carefully read the report of the Security Council mission and the earlier report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan. We share the mission's positive assessment of the achievements of

the Government of President Karzai and the people of Afghanistan over the past five years. The establishment of genuinely democratically elected representative institutions and sustained economic growth, as well as growing trade and economic cooperation, investment in core infrastructure projects and the implementation of education, health and rural development programmes, are praiseworthy, particularly as they were achieved in the face of adversity. At the same time, the support of the international community has been substantial and fairly consistent. India is happy to continue playing a role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, given our historic ties with the Afghan people.

There is no doubt that the most pressing task before us is to overcome the challenge of insecurity. We have heard several arguments suggesting that the lack of effective governance in Afghanistan, widespread corruption, the inefficiency of the police service, the growing narcotics trade and continued warlordism in the provinces all contribute to the security problem. That may well be true, but to focus on those as the cause of the security problems is, in our judgement, to miss the point. Those are factors which thrive on insecurity and serve to exacerbate it. They are not causes of insecurity. Instead, it is the revival of the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, and the existence of cross-border safe havens for such groups, that are the real cause of insecurity. In focusing on rebuilding and strengthening Afghan State institutions, the roots of insecurity should not be forgotten.

The report (S/2005/935) refers to Operation Medusa. As we know, a greater number of people than the number of those killed in Operation Medusa became active again. Therefore, Operation Medusa has not even contained, let alone eliminated, Medusa herself; the snakes are still swirling because of the cross-border dimension. That reinforces the importance of this aspect, and historical experience shows that unless it is addressed, attempts at stability or security will be unavailing. It is therefore important to confront, rather than to strike deals with, the Taliban, which is really tantamount — if I may continue to use the metaphor — to looking at the image of Medusa in the shield without striking at Medusa herself.

While the report of the Council mission suggests that insurgency is largely confined to one third of Afghanistan, the situation remains precarious. The statistics of the International Security Assistance Force itself show that in recent months security incidents have escalated by as much as 70 per cent and 50 per cent in Paktika and Khost provinces. Therefore, it is not clear that efforts to negotiate peace in the more troubled Afghan provinces are succeeding; indeed, terrorist violence spreading elsewhere may suggest the opposite. Moreover, the growing incidence of suicide bombings shows the increasing spread of an ideology and tactics typical of Al-Qaida, which are not part of the Afghan cultural and religious tradition.

Therefore, we believe that the cost of tolerating the spiralling violence is infinitely higher than any costs we might bear in quelling it through firm law enforcement action. The consequences of collective inaction may well be borne by the international community in general, but will certainly be borne by the States of the region in particular.

It is in this context that India emphasizes the need to simultaneously implement firm and effective law enforcement measures, security sector reform programmes, capacity-building measures and regional cooperation in all fields. Similarly, the growth of representative political parties and the broad-basing of the culture of democratic political activism, which is already under way, are developments that should be fostered, since they also greatly help in checking terrorism. All of these contribute to the effort to create credible and sustained opportunities to build upon the growing constituency for peace in Afghanistan and across the region. Nevertheless, they must be accompanied by firm measures to enforce peace.

It was fortuitous that the Security Council mission visited our region a few days prior to the second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, which India had the honour to host, jointly with our Afghan brothers, in New Delhi last month. The regional dimension is explicitly recognized in the report of the mission, in context of finding ways to help Afghanistan overcome the challenges before it.

Indeed, the New Delhi Declaration of the Second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan notes that a

> "strategy for development for Afghanistan which is based on cooperation with regional countries creates significant possibilities for reducing poverty and for achieving the Afghanistan Compact benchmarks and Millennium Development Goals in the entire region".

Towards this end, it outlines a number of useful suggestions for the countries of the region to coordinate policies for exploiting shared resources like water, agriculture and energy, to develop capacity-building programmes, and to expand trade and transport linkages, in order to design and build appropriate regional projects.

Similarly, we believe that more work needs to be done to reverse the expansion of narcotics production. Not only is it necessary to implement policies to stop cultivation, but it is also important to focus on simultaneously implementing crop substitution programmes and improving border management mechanisms. It will take a coordinated effort by the Government and people of Afghanistan, as well as by regional players, to effectively address this particular challenge.

India's support for a sovereign, stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan is consistent and well known. We see a resurgent, stable, sovereign and peaceful Afghanistan as an essential element in the emerging mosaic of regional cooperation underpinning our world. It is also part of a process that reclaims for the people of Afghanistan their rightful place in our collective future. Afghanistan's entry into the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, at its last Summit in Dhaka, was a manifestation of this. We believe that Afghanistan can and must be provided with the means to re-establish itself as the crossroads of Asia, and as one of the future transport hubs and energy bridges of our region.

In conclusion, let me also reiterate our firm commitment to our partnership with Afghanistan, which today covers a multidimensional cooperation programme that harmonizes with the priorities of the Afghan Government. Not only have we extended financial assistance, in excess of $650 million, to fund infrastructure projects and to assist with the national budget process, we are also expanding our involvement in the capacity-building process, both through traditional training programmes and through innovative public-private partnerships that involve our apex Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Thus, our assistance spans the range of activity, from basic infrastructure such as roads, power, dams and telecom to rapidly implemented, community-based, small-scale projects, and training and capacity-building programmes. To summarize our approach, we seek to help Afghanistan create the infrastructure of a modern State while, at the same time, going beyond monetary assistance to provide the Afghan people the wherewithal to help themselves.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): The success of the United Nations-supported mission in Afghanistan in providing security, governance and development is vital to the Afghan people, but is also vital to the health and future of the United Nations, as the Prime Minister of Canada declared in the General Assembly in September.

Canada welcomes the recent mission undertaken by the Security Council to Afghanistan, which demonstrated a collective commitment to review gains made to date and to identify outstanding obstacles. I, too, would like to thank Ambassador Oshima for leading this mission so ably, and to thank Japan for maintaining focus on Afghanistan in the Council. Canada hopes and expects this level of consistent engagement by the Council on Afghanistan to continue in the months ahead.

The mission's report (S/2006/935), combined with the Secretary-General's report of 11 September and the biannual progress report of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), provide frank and comprehensive assessments of the current situation. Taken together, they provide all of us with concrete recommendations to guide our ongoing efforts.

There has been important progress in Afghanistan in 2006. Notably, the Bonn process drew to a close this past January, and the Afghanistan Compact was launched by the Afghan Government and the international community. Across Afghanistan, governance institutions are emerging, including the Parliament, the Supreme Court and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. Development and reconstruction are occurring, although perhaps at a slower pace than we would all hope. Significant challenges, nevertheless, continue to confront Afghanistan.

Indeed, Canada's commitment to Afghanistan has been steadfast, and we have deployed our soldiers where they are needed most. It is clear that they are now needed in the south, where insurgents are trying to hold ordinary Afghans hostage by preventing them from receiving the most basic of services from their

elected Government — health, education and the rule of law. We encourage all Member States to consider how they can contribute to meeting Afghan needs in the south.

Canada is committed to improving the lives of Afghans. As part of our approach, we have committed nearly $1 billion in development assistance from 2001 to 2010. Alongside the Afghan Government, the United Nations, NATO and our other international partners, we are striving to help establish a stable, democratic and self-sufficient Afghanistan. At its core, this is all about restoring normalcy to the Afghan people: girls and boys attending school, women starting small businesses, refugees returning home and citizens feeling free enough to express their views.

The Afghanistan Compact objectives are Canada's objectives. They will only be successfully achieved, however, through concerted international partnership, building the confidence of the Afghan people and the Afghan Government's leadership.

The United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) is the primary international institution responsible for stewardship of the Compact, alongside the Afghan Government. UNAMA has a crucial role to play in strengthening the emerging governance institutions of the Afghan State, including through capacity-building. Canada encourages UNAMA to enhance its role on the ground in Afghanistan, particularly in the areas of governance, human rights and the rule of law. This will involve additional resources in Kabul as well as in the regional offices across Afghanistan, including in Kandahar. Canada will continue to support UNAMA through the secondment of police and corrections advisors, and hopes that others will make similar commitments.

Canada, therefore, supports the Mission's recommendation that the Secretary-General consider measures to promote UNAMA's coordinating role both in Kabul and at the provincial and local levels, and welcomes the ongoing expansion of UNAMA into the provinces.

Afghanistan's neighbours also have a central role to play. Instability does not respect borders and poverty is infectious. High-level regional engagement and cooperation are critical to stemming the trafficking in narcotics, finding sustainable solutions for Afghan refugees and addressing transnational terrorism, including the cross-border movement of insurgents. In this regard, we welcome the commitment of both Afghanistan and Pakistan to a meaningful and constructive cross-border dialogue. We are also hopeful that initial discussions, in the context of this recent mission, with the Government of Pakistan can lead to concrete improvements.

Canada strongly shares the concern expressed by the mission regarding the humanitarian implications of the use of landmines along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

The people of Afghanistan must have faith in their institutions of Government in order to have faith in their future. Neither they nor we can tolerate corruption within the ranks of Afghanistan's national, provincial or local institutions. We welcome the Afghan Government's commitment to fighting corruption, as expressed by the Ambassador here today. The Afghan people are entitled to an effective, accountable and transparent Government.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada strongly supports the Council's recommendation that collective efforts be redoubled to build an effective Afghan National Police that can operate with the confidence of the people throughout the country. Policing is a priority area for Canada in Afghanistan. Through our civilian police contingent in our Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar, we are providing training and mentorship to Afghan police.

We also hope that any auxiliary police forces deployed to southern Afghanistan will be properly vetted, trained and equipped, and will be fully accountable and operating under central authority.

Canada welcomes the emphasis in the Security Council mission report on human rights, including especially women's rights and the protection of civilians. Canada has strongly supported the development of the Action Plan for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation and looks forward to its formal launch on 10 December on the occasion of International Human Rights Day by the Government of Afghanistan. Ultimately, the Afghan Government's capacity to provide basic services and ensure good governance is critical to our collective success. We will continue to support and expect strong Afghan leadership with respect to the critical challenges confronting Afghanistan. This includes visible and unequivocal

action in the combat against corruption and for the disbandment of illegal armed groups, among other things. We would also welcome continued efforts to extend Afghan national programmes to southern Afghanistan and to other areas where the need is ever more pressing.

It is in the interest of every country represented in this Chamber to help the Afghan people in their time of need. Afghans are counting on the United Nations and its Member States to make good on our collective commitments, as reflected in the Afghanistan Compact. We commend the Security Council for its decision to undertake this important mission in Afghanistan and call on it to keep this issue high on its agenda in the months to come.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the members of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Raymond Johansen, and invite him to take the floor.

Mr. Johansen (Norway): Norway welcomes the Security Council's second mission to Afghanistan. The mission was indeed a timely one, as the situation in the country is still cause for grave concern. The report contains important recommendations. I would like to commend Ambassador Oshima and other members of the delegation for the initiative to map the terrain at this crucial moment. Let me initially also commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Koenigs and his United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) team for their efforts and dedication in spite of difficult circumstances.

Norway supports the views expressed by the European Union (EU) and appreciates the constructive role of, and the close cooperation with, EU Special Representative Vendrell.

As it stated during the recent deliberations of the General Assembly on Afghanistan, Norway believes that the situation calls for a broad and comprehensive strategy. Three challenges are facing us: first, a need for improved coordination of international assistance; secondly, a need for capacity-building within Government institutions, the police, the judiciary and the army; and, thirdly, more concerted efforts to support the Afghan Government's outreach beyond the capital and to help it improve its own institutions. These challenges are closely interlinked. Norway stands ready to contribute to developing and implementing a strategy that addresses these issues.

In 2007, Norway intends to increase its financial assistance to Afghanistan to at least 450 million Norwegian krone, or approximately $72 million. That is an increase of more than $16 million. We will continue to contribute in accordance with national priorities and the Afghanistan Compact and to channel substantial resources to the Afghan budget through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). A key to success would be rapid progress on the development of the Afghan National Development Strategy. The plan should be focused and uncomplicated. It is crucial that it be developed on the basis of consultations that are truly national.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) continues to play a key role in providing security. Norway is committed to continuing its participation in that respect.

Turning to the mission report, Norway would particularly emphasize the importance of enhancing the coordinating role of UNAMA. Norway is currently looking at ways to assist UNAMA in strengthening its capacity in the area of humanitarian coordination, both in Kabul and in the field. It is imperative that UNAMA be present in the provinces. Civil-military coordination should be strengthened, while a clear division of roles and tasks should be maintained. Humanitarian assistance must be based on humanitarian principles. Norway strongly supports the mission's appeal to the Secretary-General to make specific recommendations on how to promote UNAMA's coordinating role.

Norway agrees that it is important to strengthen the Afghan National Police. Norway will increase its efforts to achieve that goal and is looking forward to continuing its close cooperation with Afghan authorities, the EU and other stakeholders. UNAMA has an important role to play in that arena as well, not least in assisting the Afghan authorities in speeding up reforms. Reform within the Ministry of Interior is vital. In particular, I would like to point out the importance of improving procedures for appointments and respecting them.

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), of which Norway is now a member, has a significant role to play. Norway welcomes its recent report, which contained a balanced description of challenges and achievements. We welcome the

proposal to hold a meeting of the JCMB with senior officials. Further strengthening of headquarters coordination is required. The Norwegian proposal to appoint a special envoy is aimed at strengthening the dialogue between capitals and international organizations, in support of the Afghan Government and UNAMA.

Norway also welcomes recent efforts to strengthen regional cooperation. A political dialogue and facilitation of economic cooperation within the region would be helpful in endeavours to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan.

The Governments of Afghanistan and of Pakistan should be encouraged to continue their cooperation on security matters in the border areas. The involvement of local leaders in this dialogue will, hopefully, prove to be useful in that respect.

Finally, Norway would like to stress the importance of making the empowerment of women a cross-cutting priority, in line with the recommendations of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. Women's rights and women's needs should be given particular attention in Afghanistan as well.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the Council's presidency for this month. I am confident that you will lead the Council with your well-known wisdom and ability. I also extend my appreciation to your predecessor.

Allow me also to thank Ambassador Oshima for his informative briefing on the recent mission to Afghanistan. We are grateful to the Secretary-General and to his Special Representative, Mr. Tom Koenigs, as well as to their colleagues in UNAMA, for their tireless efforts and dedication. We continue to underline the central role of the United Nations.

The recent Security Council mission visited Afghanistan at a crucial juncture, at a time when, on the one hand, the Afghan people have many reasons to be satisfied with their accomplishments, while, on the other, a number of grave challenges have tempered their legitimate hopes with signs of disillusionment.

It is indeed imperative to emphasize in words and in deeds the continued commitment of the international community to support the Government and people of Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Compact, under Afghan ownership and leadership, which remains the central and strategic framework for cooperation between the Afghan Government and the international community.

As rightly mentioned in the reports of the mission and of the Secretary-General, in the past several years, Afghans have undertaken significant efforts, with the support of the international community, towards the development and stability of Afghanistan. These achievements are grounds for hope and optimism. As these reports indicate, the major achievements of the Afghans in the past several years include the establishment of democratic institutions, economic growth, per capita income increase, trade and investment expansion — principally with regional partners, including Iran — significant infrastructure projects, and successful national programmes in the fields of education, health and rural development, along with the development of new Afghan security institutions.

However, it is unfortunate that, despite all these positive and encouraging developments, the Afghan people are still facing grave and daunting challenges in their endeavours towards stability, security and development. The security situation, as mentioned in the reports, has, in general, remained precarious throughout the country, with the increasing threat of suicide attacks and other forms of terrorism, posed mostly by the Taliban and Al-Qaida. We agree with the finding of the mission that the spread of insurgent and terrorist activity by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, linked with the illegal drug trade and coupled with other menaces such as corruption, collectively disrupt rehabilitation and reconstruction work in Afghanistan, thus posing a grave threat to reconstruction and nation-building.

We strongly condemn the terrorist acts perpetrated in Afghanistan and remain steadfast in our unwavering support for the Afghan people and Government in their efforts to achieve development and security.

In the meantime, we believe that in combating terrorism and insecurity in Afghanistan, any action, including contacts and talks with terrorists who are responsible for insecurity and mayhem, that could be

wrongly interpreted as rewarding terrorists and criminals should be avoided.

We support the report's conclusion that establishing a strong and sustainable Afghan National Army is of vital importance in effectively addressing the surge in terrorist activities and violence in certain parts of Afghanistan. In this regard, it is imperative to redouble the efforts to establish a trusted and effective Afghan National Police throughout the country and to address the inadequate and belated efforts to develop the Afghan National Army.

As a neighbouring country, the Islamic Republic of Iran is extremely concerned over the increase in poppy cultivation and opium production in Afghanistan, which according to various findings has increased from 180 tons in 2001 to 6,100 tons this year, representing more than 60 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product. We concur with the mission's interlocutors, who have identified Afghanistan's flourishing narco-economy as a primary threat to the stability of the country and as a cancer that is fast becoming the number one problem in Afghanistan and the wider region.

To effectively address this menace, greater efforts and resolute actions on the part of both Afghanistan and the wider international community are unquestionably needed. We share the view that a more robust campaign against drug traffickers, the elimination of illicit poppy cultivation, demand reduction, crop substitution, the strengthening of law enforcement, promoting and diversifying lawful livelihoods and stepping up Government activities to arrest and prosecute major drug traffickers, regardless of their position or status, and proceeding with the energetic implementation of all elements of the National Drug Control Strategy are vital and indispensable if this menace is to be contained, let alone eradicated.

For its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran has fought a costly war against heavily armed drug traffickers and is resolute in its continued fight against that menace. Meanwhile, for Iran to sustain its ongoing fight against drug trafficking, international support, especially the cooperation of neighbouring countries, is essential.

Given the importance of regional cooperation to help the Afghans cope with growing insecurity, we look with hope to a number of positive steps taken in the past several months with a view to enhancing cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours in more rigorously addressing the insecurity and terrorist threats in the south, south-east and east of Afghanistan. In this context, my Government has always been at the forefront of efforts to support a regional dialogue to combat terrorism, extremism and traffic in drugs. We have also actively promoted regional cooperation for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, as well as cooperation on refugee issues.

We continue to have an enormous stake in the success of the Afghan people and thus have extended our unreserved cooperation to them and their representatives throughout the process. Of $560 million worth of reconstruction assistance for Afghanistan pledged by Iran at the Tokyo Conference — which is the highest pledge in terms of per capita income of donor countries — we have thus far spent $270 million on mutually agreed projects in the areas of infrastructure, technical and educational services and financial and in-kind assistance.

During his latest visit to Iran last May, President Karzai, heading nine cabinet ministers and several provincial governors, conferred with Iranian authorities and discussed the expansion of relations in areas of mutual interest. During the visit, seven agreements and memorandums of understanding on exchange of prisoners, extradition of criminals, promotion of investment and construction of the Khwaf-Herat railway, as well as cooperation in cultural, judicial and economic fields, were signed.

The people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran have warmly hosted 3 million Afghan refugees for about three decades, incurring huge costs in the process. Now that Afghanistan has entered a new phase of its history, we expect more cooperation on the part of the international community and the Afghan Government in the process of voluntary repatriation of refugees. Despite the commendable actions taken in the past several years, progress has yet to reach a satisfactory level. We had expected the Security Council mission to address the important issue of refugees and their return in a more serious manner during its visit and in its report.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, on behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council this month. It is a special pleasure to see the

fraternal State of Qatar and you, my dear friend, preside over the Council at this important juncture.

Let me also express our appreciation to Ambassador Voto-Bernales of Peru for his successful presidency in November.

The visit of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan last month was timely. We congratulate Ambassador Oshima for the presentation of a factual and objective report on its findings. The overview contained in the report of the mission is similar to the assessment that was presented in the report of the Secretary-General in September (S/2006/727).

It is a euphemism to say that the security environment is precarious. Certainly, it is dangerous, but we must understand the reasons for that environment comprehensively and honestly. In the view of Pakistan, the deterioration in the security environment in Afghanistan is the result of three major failures.

First is the failure of governance. We have rampant corruption and misgovernance both at the centre and in the provinces. We have a drug-based economy — 60 per cent of the gross domestic product, according to Afghanistan's own figures. We have a much-publicized failure of security sector reform in the police as well as in the national army.

The second failure is the failure of reconstruction. There has been some development in the northern parts of Afghanistan, but there has been virtually no development in the South and the South-East of Afghanistan, which is largely terra incognita for the Kabul Government. That is where there are large sanctuaries for the militancy that today threatens Afghanistan and Pakistan. Large tracts of land are out of the control of both the Kabul Government and the Coalition forces. There, the Islamic militants rule, certainly by night and often by day. We must bring reconstruction if the Afghan people and the people of that region are to have a stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The third failure is the failure of reconciliation. Large sections of the Afghan people, particularly the Pashtuns, have been left out of the power structure, both at the centre and in the provinces. Warlords rule and fight against each other, and people have complete insecurity. They therefore turn to anyone who can provide that security for them.

Pakistan has a vital stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan. The 25 years of war in Afghanistan have destabilized and radicalized our frontier regions and alienated some of the Pashtuns because of what is happening in Afghanistan. Pakistan therefore desires peace and stability in Afghanistan. If we are to serve the larger objective of serving as a bridge between Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia, we need peace in Afghanistan. Above all, however, Pakistan's support for Afghanistan and our cooperation with Afghanistan are dictated by the natural affiliation between our peoples of history, of faith, of ethnicity and of common suffering during difficult years.

We are therefore pained to hear insinuations and allegations such as those which were expressed today by my brother from Afghanistan. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan is today in Kabul discussing ways and means by which we can cooperate with and help Afghanistan. But help is based on mutual trust, and when we hear our Afghan brothers mouth allegations which are either untrue or grossly exaggerated, we question the motives. We ask ourselves why they seek to explain their own failure by pointing fingers across the border. We wonder whether they are acting on their own behalf or whether they are acting as a puppet of those who desire to erode relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the brotherly peoples of the two countries. People speak about medusas, but believe in Kali, the goddess of war. We ask our Afghan brothers to refrain from such exaggerations and allegations if they desire our cooperation.

The Taliban are an Afghan phenomenon. My brother has quoted from the report of the Secretary-General; let me also refer to that report. The Secretary-General's report rightly notes that the insurgency in Afghanistan is being conducted by "Afghans operating inside Afghanistan's borders" (*S/2006/727, para. 5*). The report also identifies five distinct leadership centres of the insurgency, all located within Afghanistan. According to the report, "[t]he foot soldiers of the insurgency are Afghans recruited within Afghanistan" (*ibid., para. 9*). We therefore reject insinuations of Pakistan's providing sanctuaries or of any training and recruitment in Pakistan. Certainly, we would ask such friends as Denmark to come and check before they repeat such allegations.

There are, of course, some elements of the Taliban and their sympathizers who crossed over into Pakistan following the post-9/11 military intervention

by the United States and Coalition forces in Afghanistan. Those Taliban and militants from Al-Qaida melded into the 3 million Afghan refugees who have been hosted for the past 25 years by Pakistan.

Pakistan is helping Afghanistan in the security sector, including through the Tripartite Commission. The United States, the International Security Assistance Force, NATO and even Afghan officials are aware of the nature and the extent of Pakistan's support. Pakistan believes that the Taliban are a common threat to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their vision is contrary to the vision of modernism which we are seeking to promote in our country. But the Taliban are Afghans, operating in large areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan. Those operations could not take place unless the local population were sympathetic to the Taliban and the militants who operate with impunity in those large tracts of Afghanistan. Pakistan, for its part, has made every effort to prevent illegal border crossing. We have deployed 80,000 troops – more than the total of Coalition and Afghan forces on the other side. We have lost 600 of our personnel, who have been killed in the 80 operations we have conducted. Thus, there can be no doubt about the sincerity and commitment of Pakistan to bring security to the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. But that responsibility must be joint.

We do not accept that the onus is only on Pakistan. We have 700 posts along the border with Afghanistan and 80,000 troops. There is only a fraction of that number on the other side. In the North Waziristan area, we have 97 posts, while NATO-ISAF has three and the Afghan army 21. We therefore ask for a matching effort to control the long and difficult border. One should refrain from making allegations against Pakistan and seeking to transfer blame to Pakistan.

I would add that the international community has avoided seriously addressing the problem of the Afghan refugees. There are 3 million refugees still in Pakistan. Without any appreciable international assistance, we support them, on our own. They constitute one tenth of the total population of Afghanistan. Many of the complaints regarding illegal border crossings would end, if we could return the refugees to Afghanistan.

We have proposed that the Afghan refugee camps on the border be relocated to the Afghan side. We are planning to return all refugees to Afghanistan within three years. That should put an end to the allegations of cross-border movement.

But it is surprising that the refugee issue does not figure in the report of the Security Council mission. We wonder, and would ask Ambassador Oshima, whether the issue raised by the Kabul side. It is certain that it was raised by the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, when he was consulted in Islamabad by Ambassador Oshima. But that issue is totally ignored. We have said that in order to prevent cross-border movement, we want to fence the border — at least selectively. That was not accepted by our partners. We proposed, more drastically, to mine the border, but that is opposed on humanitarian grounds, as we just heard from Canada.

People speak loosely about the agreement we concluded in the North Waziristan area of our frontier. We did so in order to calm the area and to prevent cross-border action by militants. We made an agreement with the tribal elders and not with the Taliban. The result is that there is calm in North Waziristan today and that can be independently established. The incidents of violence in Afghanistan have declined since September. That can be confirmed by the statistics from NATO and ISAF.

The fighting currently taking place in Afghanistan is mostly in Helmand Province, which is quite a distance from the border. There too, United Kingdom forces reached a similar agreement with tribal leaders in the Musa Qala area, which has calmed the situation there. Pakistan intends to convene tribal jirgas in other parts of our frontier region to conclude peace and development agreements that are similar to that in North Waziristan. Jirgas in the tribal areas of Pakistan and across the border in southern and eastern Afghanistan are a time-honoured local tradition. It is a process aimed at promoting consensus and reconciliation by involving credible intermediaries and tribal elders.

We believe that such agreements could be replicated on the Afghan side to strengthen the tribal and traditional leadership structures, end political alienation, cease hostilities, bring about normalcy and promote reconstruction and development. That approach was endorsed at the summit meeting between President Musharraf, President Karzai and President

Bush in September 2006, in Washington, D.C. Foreign Minister Kasuri is visiting Kabul today for further discussion on the modalities of the jirgas.

Pakistan will continue to provide its cooperation and support to Afghanistan. But the problems of Afghanistan need to be addressed through a holistic approach based on political reconciliation, improved security and governance and rapid and large-scale economic and social development and reconstruction.

On its own, Afghanistan cannot achieve those goals. It needs the support of the international community. Despite its limited resources and its own problems, Pakistan has committed $250 million for reconstruction in Afghanistan. We have spent over half of that amount and 60,000 Pakistanis are in Afghanistan helping in the reconstruction.

As Ambassador Oshima appropriately warned in his briefing, it is abundantly clear that Afghanistan needs additional and sustained support and assistance from the international community. Without such support, there is no guarantee that Afghanistan will not slide backwards into conflict and become a failed State once again.

We believe it is necessary to win the hearts and minds of the people through a political and economic approach. Military means, often necessary, cannot deliver in and of themselves. In that perspective, President Musharraf has proposed the implementation of a Marshall Plan-like programme of $4 to $5 billion in south and south east Afghanistan. That amount is only a fraction of what is spent on military operations in Afghanistan. The international community should seriously consider that proposal, which, under the prevailing circumstances, could provide a realistic chance of bringing durable peace and development to Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to note that there will be consultations of the whole after this meeting on the situation in the Middle East and Lebanon, immediately after the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.